

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 172475
ORIGIN SS-25

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O 080210Z JUL 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 172475

EXDIS, FOR VATICAN OFFICE

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PINT, MOPS, LE, VT

SUBJECT: THE VATICAN AND LEBANON

REF: (A) ROME 12481; (B) ROME 12373; (C) STATE 171142,
(C) BEIRUT 3807

1. YOU SHOULD ASSURE VATICAN THAT WE HAVE MADE STRONG
REPRESENTATIONS TO SYRIA TO BRING ABOUT A CEASEFIRE,
VIRTUALLY FROM THE MOMENT THE FIGHTING IN BEIRUT ERUPTED.
YOU MAY DRAW FULLY ON STATE 171142 TO DESCRIBE THE STEPS
WE HAVE BEEN TAKING TO CALM DOWN THE SITUATION.

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2. YOU SHOULD CONTINUE TO BRIEF THE VATICAN REGULARLY
ON DEVELOPMENTS, DRAWING EXTENSIVELY ON BEIRUT SITREPS AND
OTHER GUIDANCE WHICH WILL BE SENT TO YOU. FOR THE MOMENT,
BELIEVE YOU SHOULD NOT DRAW ON BEIRUT 3807 AS REGARDS
SYRIAN INTENTIONS.

3. WE BELIEVE A VISIT TO LEBANON BY SPECIAL EMISSARY OF

THE POPE COULD HAVE A POSITIVE EFFECT, AND SUGGEST THAT THE VATICAN RECONSIDER ITS UTILITY. THE EMISSARY COULD PERFORM A USEFUL ROLE IN URGING MODERATION UPON CHRISTIAN LEADERS, AS WELL AS STRICT COMPLIANCE WITH THE CEASEFIRE SO THAT TIME CAN BE GAINED TO WORK OUT A SOLUTION WHICH WOULD FORESTALL FUTURE ERUPTIONS OF FIGHTING. WHETHER OR NOT AN EMISSARY IS SENT, WE HOPE THE VATICAN WILL FIND WAYS TO ENCOURAGE PRESIDENT SARKIS TO REMAIN IN OFFICE AND TO URGE RESTRAINT AND PATIENCE ON CHRISTIAN LEADERS.

4. WE AGREE WITH BEIRUT 3807 THAT THE VATICAN SHOULD BE CAREFUL TO AVOID GIVING LEBANESE CHRISTIAN LEADERS THE IMPRESSION THAT THE VATICAN SUPPORTS THEIR CAUSE UNRESERVEDLY. VANCE

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